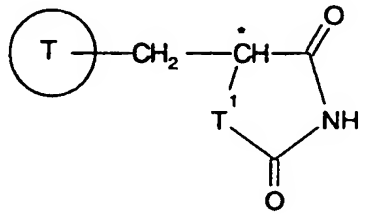
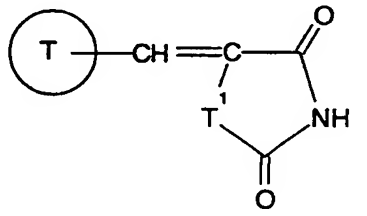
Claims

1. A process for preparing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

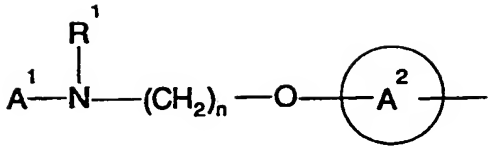
or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, wherein: T represents a substituted or unsubstituted aryl group and T^1 is O or S; which process comprises, treating a compound of formula (II):



(II)

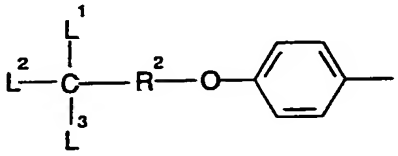
or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a salt thereof and/or a solvate thereof, wherein T and T^1 are as defined in relation to formula (I), with a microbial reductase obtained from an appropriate red yeast; and thereafter, as required, preparing a pharmaceutically acceptable salt and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate of the compound of formula (I) or a tautomeric form thereof.

2. A process according to claim 1, wherein T represents a moiety selected from the list consisting of (Ia), (Ib), (Ic), (Id), (Ie), (If), (Ig), (Ih), (Ii), (Ij), (Il), (Im), (In), (Io) and (Ip):



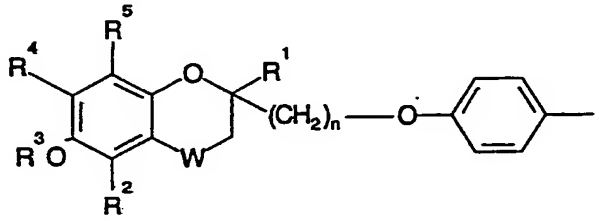
(Ia)

wherein A^1, A^2, R^1 and n are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0306228;



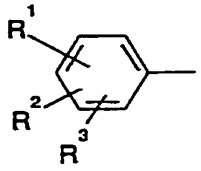
(Ib)

wherein R^2, L^1, L^2 and L^3 are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0008203;



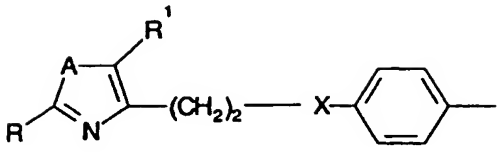
(Ic)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, W and n are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0139421;



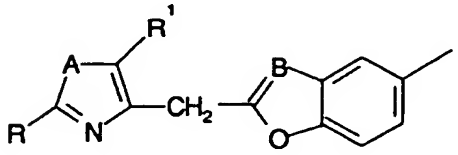
(Id)

wherein R^1, R^2 and R^3 are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0032128;



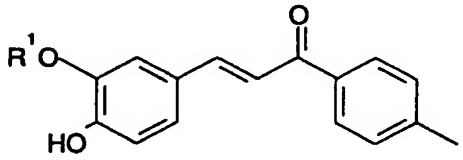
(Ie)

wherein A, R, R^1 and X are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0428312;



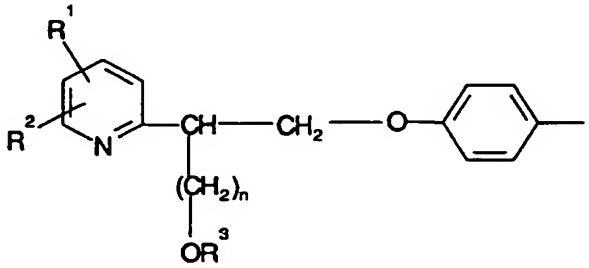
(If)

when A, B, R and R^1 are as defined in relation to formula (II) of EP 0428312;



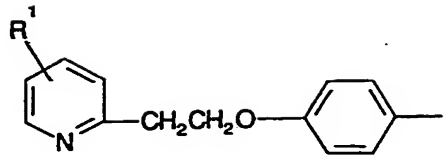
(Ig)

wherein R^1 is as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0489663;



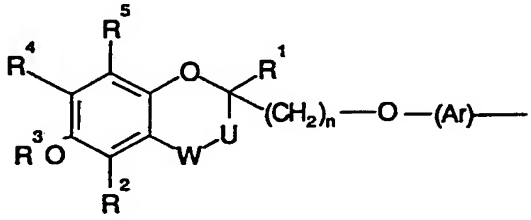
(Ih)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3 and n are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0155845;



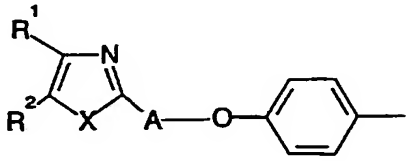
(Ii)

when R^1 is as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0257781;



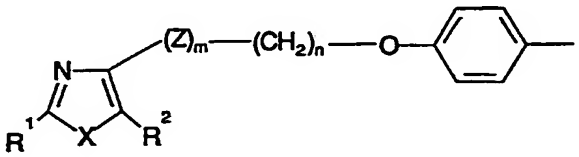
(Ij)

wherein Ar, R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, n, U and W are as defined in relation to formula (I) of United States Patent No. 5104888;



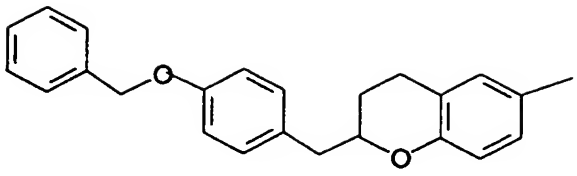
(Ik)

when A, R^1, R^2 and X are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0208420;



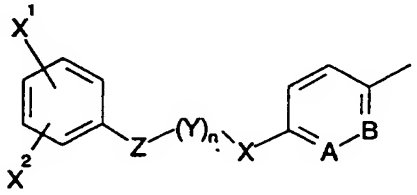
(Il)

when R^1, R^2, X, Z m and n are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0177353;



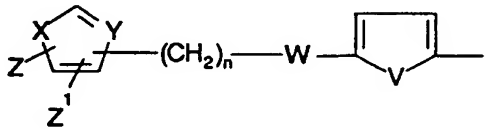
(Im)

according to formula (I) of EP 0319189;



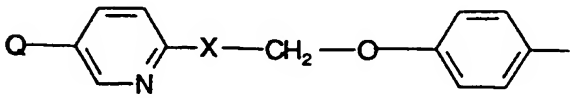
(In)

wherein A, B, X, X^1, X^2, n and Z are as defined in relation to formula (I) of EP 0332331;



(Io)

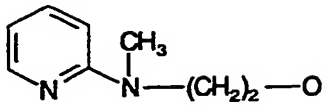
wherein V, W, X, Y, Z, Z^1 and n are as defined in EP 0332332; and



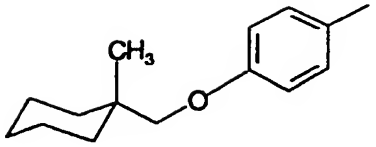
(Ip)

wherein Q and X are as defined in relation to formula (I) of International Application No. WO 92/18501.

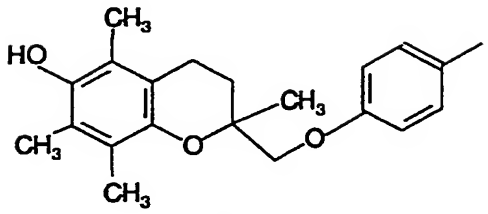
3. A process according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein T represents a moiety selected from the list consisting of (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i):



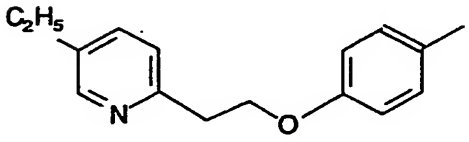
(a)



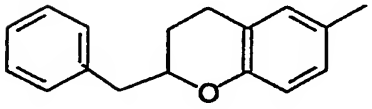
(b)



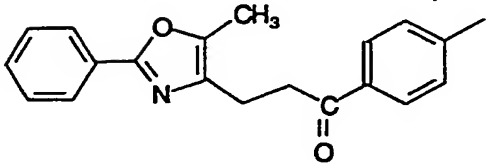
(c)



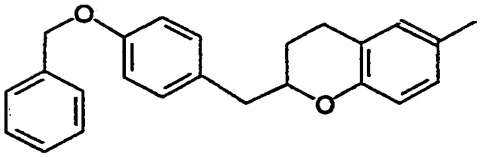
(d)



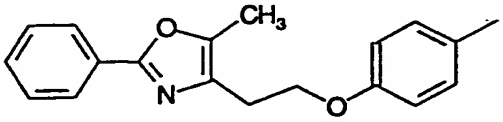
(e)



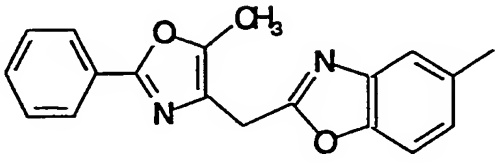
(f)



(g)



(h), and

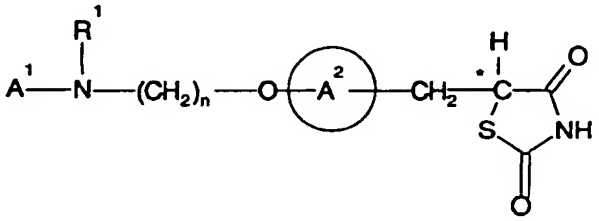


(i)

4. A process according to any one of claims1 to 3, wherein T represents a moiety of formula (Ia).

5. A process according to any one of claims1 to 4, wherein T^1 represents S.

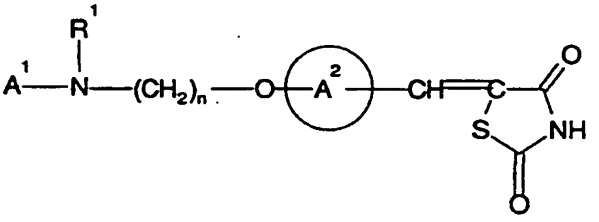
6. A process according to claim 1 for the preparition of a compound of formula (1):



(1)

or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, wherein:
A^1 represents a substituted or unsubstituted aromatic heterocyclyl group;
R^1 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group, an acyl group, an aralkyl group, wherein the aryl moiety may be substituted or unsubstituted, or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl group;
A^2 represents a benzene ring having in total up to five substituents; and
n represents an integer in the range of from 2 to 6;

which process comprises, treating a compound of formula (2):



(2)

or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a salt thereof, and/or a solvate thereof, wherein A^1, A^2, R^1 and n are as defined in relation to formula (1) with a microbial reductase obtained from an appropriate red yeast; and thereafter, as required, preparing a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate of the compound of formula (1) or a tautomeric form thereof.

7. A process according to claim 6, wherein th compound of formula (1) is 5-(4-[2-N-methyl-N-(2-pyridyl)amino)ethoxy]benzyl)-2,4-thiazolidinedione, or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof.

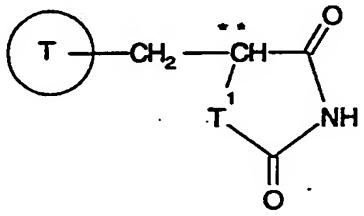
8. A process according to any one of claims1 to 7, wherein an appropriate red yeast is a red yeast which provides the above mentioned reduction, including known red yeasts and those red yeasts which may be produced from known red yeasts by conventional methods.

9. A process according to any one of claims1 to 8, wherein an appropriate red yeast is a red yeast from the species of the genera *Rhodotorula, Rhodosporidium* or synonyms thereof.

10. A process according to any one of claims1 to 9 wherein an appropriate red yeast is *Rhodotorula glutinis CBS 4406, Rhodotorula rubra CBS 6469, Rhodotorula rubra CBS 17* and *Rhodotorula glutinis IFO 0869.*

11. A process according to any one of claims1 to 9 wherein an appropriate red yeast is *Rhodosporidium toruloides CBS 14*

12. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) (the 'enantiomerically enriched compound (I)') wherein greater than 50% w/w of said compound is in the form of a compound of formula (IA) :



(IA)

or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, wherein T and T^1 are as defined in relation to formula (I) and th '**' carbon atom is an enantiomeric carbon atom,which process comprises reacting a

compound of the above defined formula (II) with a microbial reductase btained from an appropriate red yeast and wherein the reaction is carried out at an acidic pH; and thereafter, as required, preparing a pharmaceutically acceptable salt and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate of the enantiomerically enriched compound (I) or a tautomeric form thereof.

13. Enantiomerically enriched compound (I) or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, wherein greater than 50% w/w is in the form of compound (IA)

14. A compound of formula (IA) or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, in optically pure form.

15. Enantiomerically enriched compound (I), or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, for use as an active therapeutic substance.

16. Enantiomerically enriched compound (I), or a tautomeric form thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, for use in the treatment of and/or prophylaxis of hyperglycaemia, hyperlipidaemia, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and certain eating disorders.

17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising enantiomerically enriched compound (I), or a tautomeric form thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable solvate thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier therefor.